GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:346
ANSWERED ON:23.07.2003
LOW BIRTH WEIGHT BABIES
JAYABEN B. THAKKAR

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a study conducted by St. Stephen`s Hospital and the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) , New Delhi hac revealed that relationship between the birth of premature babies and high levels of pollution lead to high risk of having low birth weight (LBW) babies;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA)

(a) Yes Sir.

(b) The study jointly conducted by St. Stephens Hospital and All India Institute of Medical Sciences on the effect of pollution on the birth weight of newborns in the area of residence of the mother showed that the upper class mothers living in areas of high pollution (suspended particulate matter (SPM) more that 300 mg/m3) were at significantly higher risk of having a baby of low birth weight (defined as birth weight less than 2.5 kg.). Babies of poorer classes had increased incidence of low birth weight regardless of the pollution levels in the area of residence.

(c) As an intervention measure to reduce SPM level use of unleaded petrol has been made mandatory by Ministry of Environment.